

**ON-THE-MOVE – "The reality of free movement for young
European citizens migrating in times of crisis"**

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PERSPECTIVES ON FREE MOVEMENT:

A closer look to overcoming barriers

Cross country report



CENTRE FOR SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

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Executive summary

The aim of this document is to analyze the barriers to free movement that have arisen from the fifteen national reports of the ON THE MOVE project. It is split into two parts, the first one describes the main types of barriers, while the second considers the facilitators for overcoming these barriers

To analyze the barriers, we have separated the participating countries into the regional groupings of Eastern, Southern and North-Western countries. This grouping was made mainly for the purposes of seeing if there are any differences in patterns between the Southern and Eastern European Union countries in terms of sending into the North-Western receiving countries. The main barriers to free movement are analyzed with respect to the four groups of informants identified: Incoming, Outgoing, Returning (where applicable) and Experts. The major barriers that were mentioned by the informants (in order of frequency) are bureaucracy, language, discrimination, life, job, info, cost, housing and family.

The second part of the report deals with the facilitators. These facilitators include the means used by the interviewees and mentioned by the experts as well as including their suggestions for improvements. We consider the facilitators for overcoming barriers as reported by outgoing nationals, Incoming citizens, returnees and experts from the three regional groups of North-West, South and East, respectively. We find that there are a good deal of resources highlighted by the representatives of the authorities as available for free movers, at least into Southern and North-Western Europe, but these are less often discussed as facilitators by the free movers. In general, the free movers quite often turn to online sources and diaspora networks.

Our findings thus indicate that there is more work to be done in facilitating the free movement of EU citizens. We should also stress that in these times of migration crises in Europe, the free movement of citizens is a major accomplishment of the European project that must be cherished and protected.

Part I: The main barriers to free movement

In this cross-country report we analyze the results of the fifteen national analyses from the participating teams in the ON-THE-MOVE project (ON-THE-MOVE national teams, 2016-2017). The participating countries are separated into the regional groupings of Eastern, Southern and North-Western countries, as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1 REGIONAL GROUPINGS OF NATIONAL TEAMS

| Region | East | South | North-West |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Countries: S = sending R = receiving S+R = both | Bulgaria ^S | Cyprus ^{S+R} | Austria ^{S+R} |
| | Estonia ^S | Greece ^S | Belgium ^R |
| | Poland ^S | Italy ^{S+R} | France ^R |
| | Romania ^S | Portugal ^S | Germany ^R |
| | | Spain ^{S+R} | Netherlands ^R |
| | | UK ^R | |

This grouping was made mainly for the purposes of seeing if there are any differences in patterns between the Southern and Eastern European Union countries in terms of sending into the North-Western receiving countries. Note that this different than the way the teams were formulated in the project, in which Austria was analyzed both as a sending and receiving country, as were Cyprus, Italy and Spain. The other countries in the North-West grouping were otherwise treated as mainly receiving countries, and the remaining countries in Eastern and Southern Europe were mostly treated as sending countries of free-moving EU citizens. The reason that this makes a difference is that returning free movers were not interviewed by the national teams in the countries that were treated as mainly host countries of free-moving EU citizens.

In all other countries, the targeted groups for interviewees were: *Incoming* EU citizens; *Outgoing* nationals to other EU countries; *Returning* nationals that had lived in other EU countries; and national *Experts* on the free movement of EU citizens. There were thus only three groups of interviewees for the five countries treated as receiving countries only; and four groups for the other ten countries. In addition, only a few interviews were done with outgoing nationals in the mainly receiving countries, which was more balanced in the other two groups.

In the analysis that follows, the main barriers to free movement are analyzed with respect to the four groups of informants identified: *Incoming*, *Outgoing*, *Returning* (where applicable) and *Experts*.

The major barriers that were mentioned by the informants are listed in Table 2 in decreasing overall order of frequency.

TABLE 2 MAIN BARRIERS TO FREE MOVEMENT

| Rank | keyword | Barrier |
|-------------|----------------|--|
| 1 | Bureaucracy | Bureaucratic obstacles |
| 2 | Language | Linguistic problems |
| 3 | Discrimination | Discrimination |
| 4 | Life | Quality of life concerns (weather, cultural differences) |
| 5 | Job | Difficulties in finding suitable employment |
| 6 | Info | Lack of information in an accessible language |
| 7 | Cost | High costs in the host country |
| 8 | Housing | Difficulties in finding appropriate accommodation |
| 9 | Family | Difficulties associated with leaving behind (or bringing) loved ones when moving |

Main barriers to free movement as reported by **incoming** citizens from other EU countries

To begin with, we consider regional differences in the main barriers reported by the different national teams for incoming EU citizens who they interviewed that had come to live in their countries. As Figure 1 shows, the main barriers reported by the national teams in descending order are bureaucratic hurdles, linguistic problems, discrimination and difficulties in finding a job.

Bureaucracy: Common bureaucratic hurdles involve the registration procedures, social security issues, difficulties with the recognition of qualifications and similar administrative obstacles.

Language: Another major obstacle is the language. Most of the countries in the regional groups report language as an obstacle, although it is apparently less of an obstacle in the Southern group than it is in the North-Western group, where all teams report language as an obstacle to incoming EU citizens.

Discrimination: Nearly as many report instances of discrimination, where the incoming EU citizens report unfavorable treatment as compared to national citizens. This includes job and housing discrimination as well as poorer working conditions for incoming EU citizens.

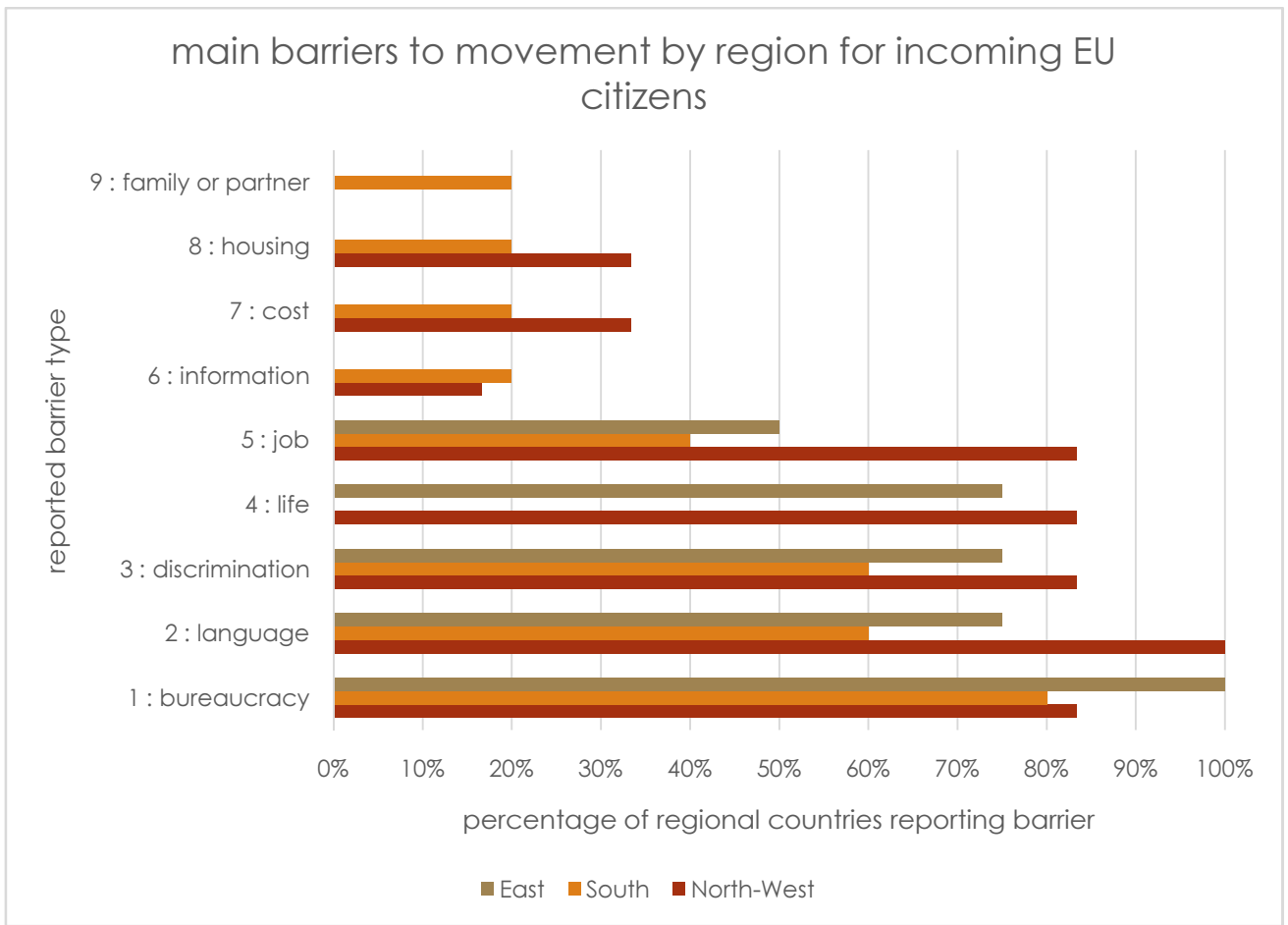


FIGURE 1: MAIN BARRIERS TO FREE MOVEMENT AS REPORTED BY INCOMING EU CITIZENS COMING TO LIVE IN THE REGIONALLY GROUPED COUNTRIES.

Life: Perhaps not surprisingly, EU citizens moving into the Southern European countries have few complaints related to the living environment, such as the weather and the friendliness of the locals. In fact, none of the five Southern countries report any complaints that would be grouped under the keyword of ‘life’ for EU citizens coming to live in their countries. On the other hand, most of the national teams from the Eastern and North-Western groups reported such complaints.

Job: Finding suitable employment was also reported as an obstacle for incoming EU citizens by most countries, particularly those from the North-West region. This might seem somewhat strange, since normally, as receiving countries, these countries would be expected to attract free movers to their job markets.

Info: One important thing to note is that most of the countries do not report that incoming EU citizens have complaints that the lack of information available to them is an obstacle to their free movement.

Cost, Housing and Family: Three other barriers that came up in the national reports are the relative costs of living between sending and receiving country,

the difficulty of finding suitable housing, and the issue of typically leaving behind, but in some cases bringing a family member or partner. Since these are relatively small issues compared to the other barriers, we do not cover these barriers in as much detail below, although they are not negligible considerations, particularly for nationals of the Eastern EU member states planning to move, as we see in the next section.

Main barriers to free movement as reported by **outgoing** nationals to other EU countries

As Figure 2 shows, the main obstacles reported by the countries according to the interviewed nationals planning to move to another EU member state is quite different from what was reported for the incoming EU citizens in the previous section.

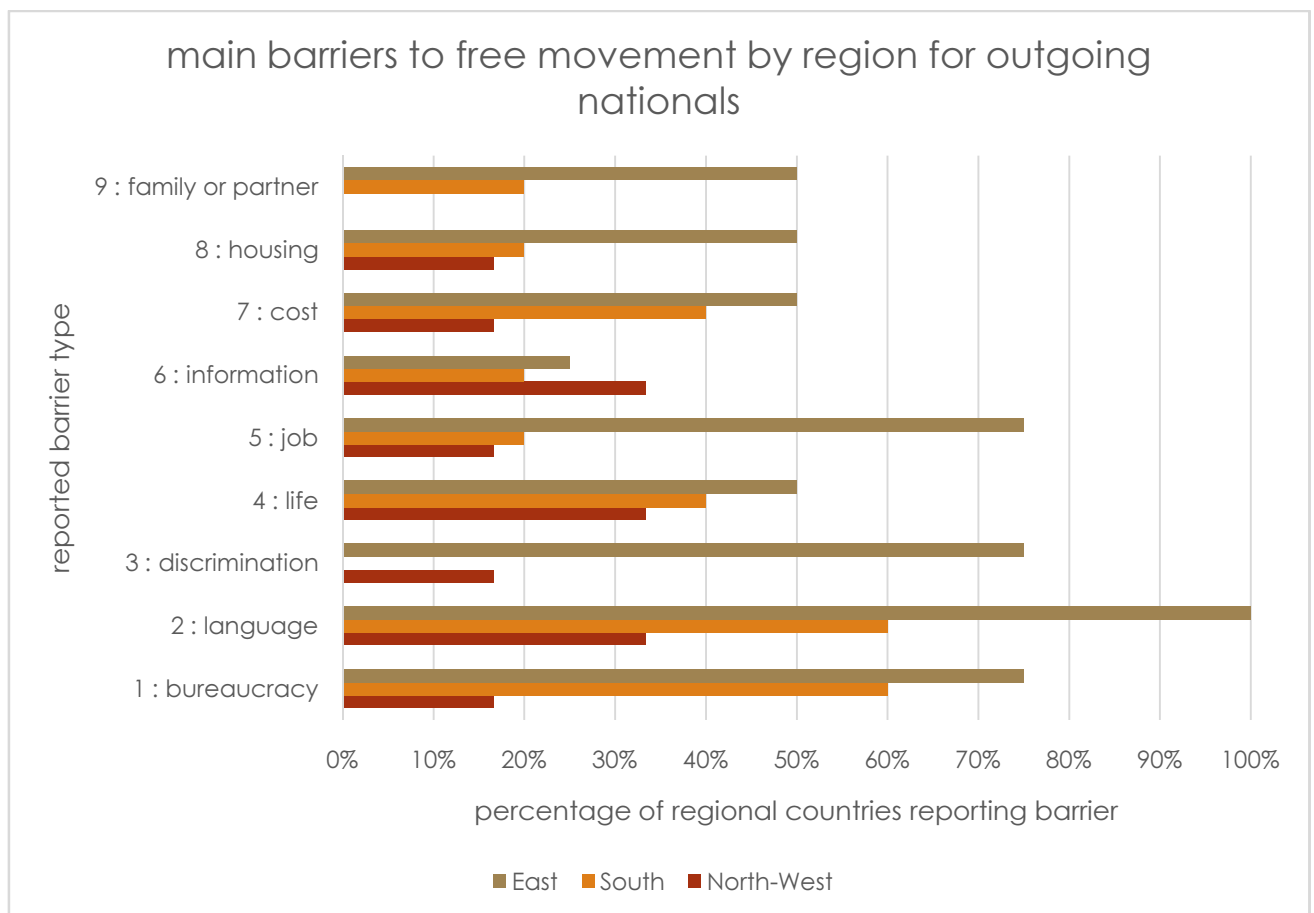


FIGURE 2: MAIN BARRIERS TO FREE MOVEMENT AS REPORTED BY OUTGOING NATIONALS FROM THE REGIONALLY GROUPED COUNTRIES WHO ARE PLANNING TO MOVE TO ANOTHER EU MEMBER STATE

The clearest thing to note is the relative lack of barriers of any kind reported by citizens of the North-Western countries, especially compared to the problems

reported by outgoing citizens of the Eastern group of countries. The most common problems reported for the North-Western group concern linguistic problems, quality of life considerations and lack of information. However, these problems are only reported by a third of the countries in this group, whereas all of the countries in the Eastern group report language as a problem for their citizens planning to move to another EU member state. Another difference is that outgoing nationals from the Eastern group report discrimination as an issue, whereas none of the Southern countries report this as an issue for their nationals planning to move to another EU member state.

We can also compare these anticipated barriers for prospective free movers to the experiences reported by nationals who have returned from another EU member state, which we do in the next section.

Main barriers to free movement as reported by nationals **returning** from other EU countries

In comparison to the anticipated barriers for the prospective free movers of the previous section, Figure 3 shows the reported barriers as experienced by interviewees from the regionally grouped countries who are returning after having lived in another EU member state. First we should note that the only country from the North-West group that interviewed such returning nationals was Austria, so we concentrate instead on the Eastern and Southern groups.

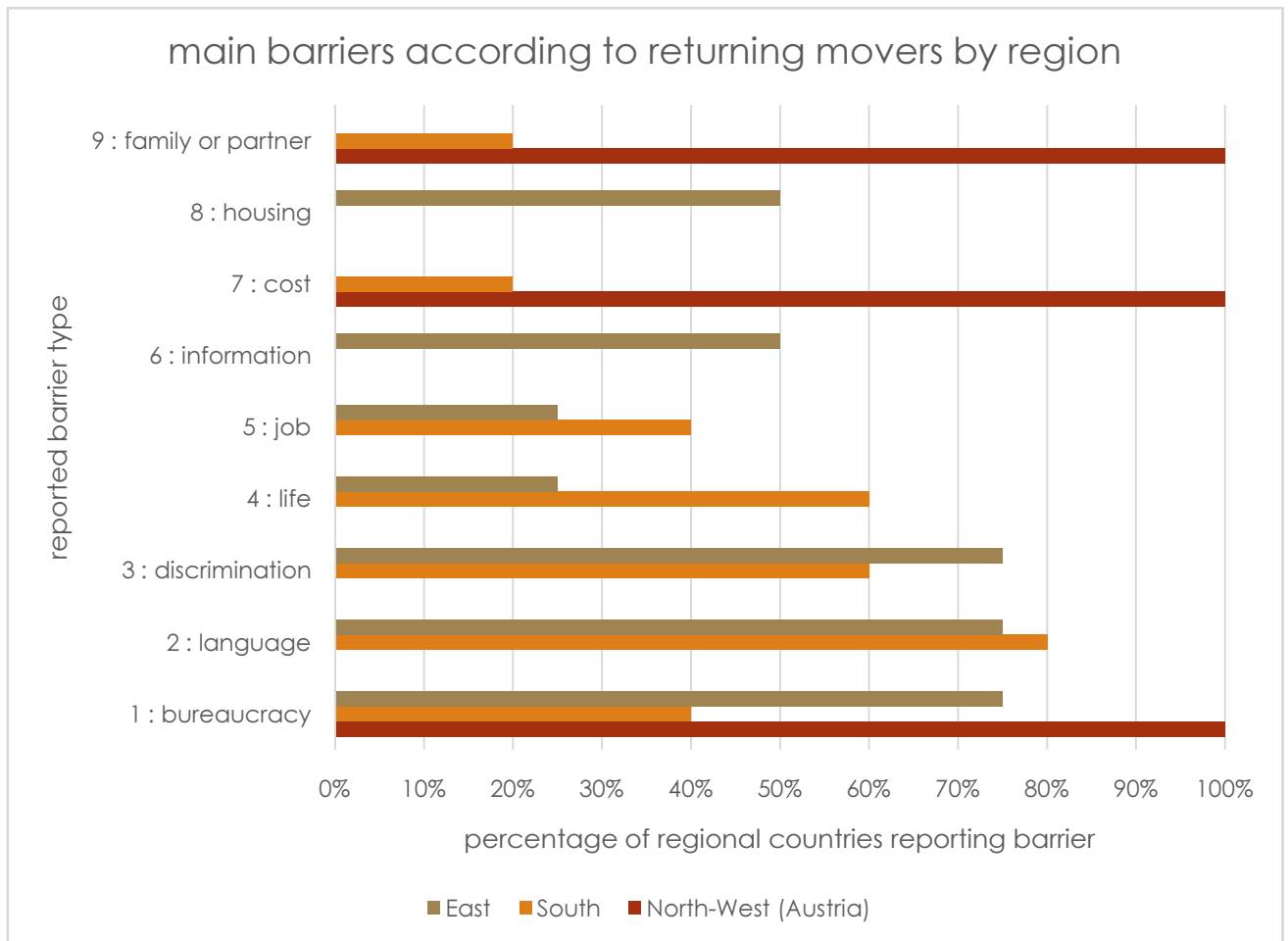


FIGURE 3: MAIN BARRIERS TO FREE MOVEMENT AS REPORTED BY NATIONALS FROM THE REGIONALLY GROUPED COUNTRIES WHO ARE RETURNING AFTER HAVING LIVED IN ANOTHER EU MEMBER STATE

First, the situation is not much different for the two groupings of Eastern and Southern countries, other than that bureaucracy, information and housing are apparently more of a problem for returning citizens from Eastern countries while climate and cultural problems are more frequently reported problems for returnees to Southern Europe.

Comparing anticipated barriers from the previous section to the experienced barriers in this section, the only major difference is in the discrimination reported by the returnees from the Southern European group. Three out of the five countries in this group reported this as a problem for their returning nationals, where none of their national planning to move anticipated this as a barrier.

In the next section we compare the experiences and anticipations of the free movers interviewed by the country teams with the views of the national experts from the same countries.

Main barriers to free movement as reported by the national experts

Figure 4 shows the views of the national experts from the regional groupings on the main barriers to free movement.

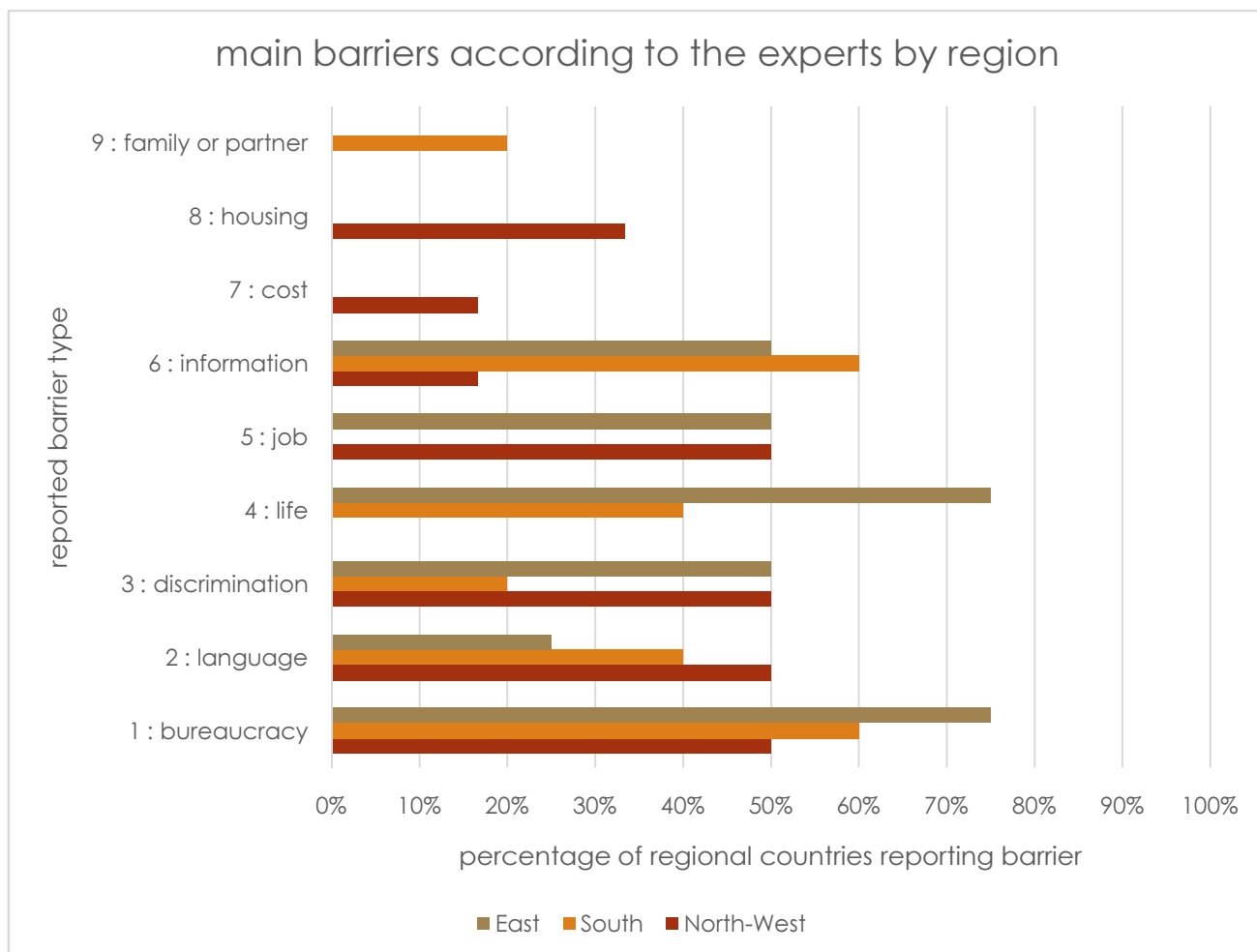


FIGURE 4: MAIN BARRIERS TO FREE MOVEMENT AS REPORTED BY NATIONAL EXPERTS FROM THE REGIONALLY GROUPED COUNTRIES

The main points of interest are how well the views of the experts correspond with the views of incoming EU citizens for the typically receiving countries of the North-West, and the outgoing and returning nationals of the sending countries of the Southern and Eastern parts of the European Union.

In the case of the experts from the North-Western countries, the biggest difference (comparing Figures 4 and 1) is in that the experts do not mention the problems with such things as climatic and cultural barriers that are mentioned prominently by incoming EU citizens to their countries.

Looking at the countries from the Eastern and Southern reaches of the EU where there is more focus on the exodus of nationals, we can compare Figure 4 to Figures 2 and 3. The experts from the Southern European countries seem to anticipate more problems for their nationals moving to other EU countries than those nationals report for themselves. None of the national teams from that region reported that their returning nationals had problems due to the lack of information available in an accessible language.

For the experts from the Eastern part of the European Union, there was less emphasis on linguistic problems than what was reported by their nationals, both those anticipating leaving and those returning from abroad.

Summary of findings on the main barriers to free movement

There is good agreement among the experts and the interviewed free movers coming into the North-Western (mostly receiving) countries that the main barriers to free movement are related to bureaucratic issues, linguistic difficulties and discrimination. General cultural and climatic problems of adjusting to the North-Western countries were also mentioned more frequently by the movers than the experts.

For the individuals from the Eastern countries of the European Union either anticipating a move abroad or returning from such a move, the national teams again report that the main barriers are associated with bureaucratic problems, language and discrimination. The experts of only one of the countries (Poland) anticipated linguistic difficulties as a significant barrier.

Turning to the Southern European countries, a similar pattern emerges, with the teams reporting bureaucratic and linguistic problems and discrimination as issues, although the latter was not reported as an anticipated barrier by prospective free movers from those countries. The lack of information was more often highlighted as a barrier by the experts than the by the free movers. On the other hand, the experts did not raise concerns about difficulties in finding suitable employment as a major barrier to the free movement of their nationals.

Overall then, given that there is little that can be done about climate and cultural differences, the outcome of this cross-country analysis is that the main barriers to contend with are connected to linguistic and bureaucratic problems and problems with discrimination. In the next part of this report, we look at ways of overcoming these and the other barriers (particularly the frequent lack of accessible information) to the exercise of free movement within the European Union.

However, as a last exercise before moving on to overcoming barriers, in Figure 5 we provide a graphical presentation of our findings on the main reported barriers to the exercise of free movement within the European Union according to prospective, current and former free movers as well as representatives of the authorities.

The plot gives a comprehensive picture of the analysis. Incoming movers (regardless of the region in which they were interviewed), together with those movers (of all types) interviewed in the Eastern countries seem to perceive the barriers with a higher intensity. Prospective movers and returnees (for all regions), as well as most types of movers interviewed in the North-Western countries, are more prone to minimising barriers. Finally, it is noticeable how those interviewed in the Southern countries (most of them belonging to the sending-receiving category) think that barriers are of medium intensity. Their view coincides with experts' opinion. Nonetheless, it could be said that this last category shows a higher variability (see figure 4).

Technical note:

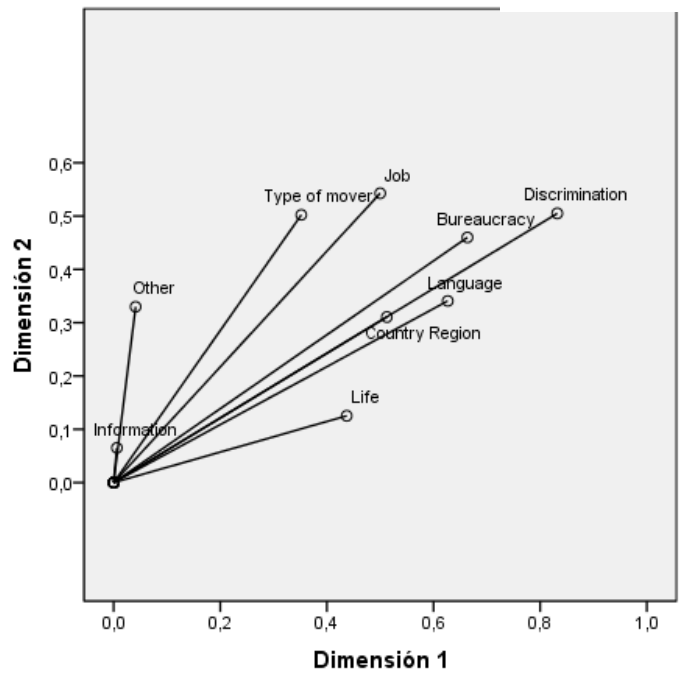
The statistical tool we have used to produce the positioning map is called Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA). MCA takes multiple categorical variables and seeks to identify associations between levels of those variables. When using multiple correspondence analysis, the axes do not need to be explained (their main role is separating –or moving closer- the different types of variables or categories of the same variable). Anyway, the axes could be considered as factors (linear combination of a series of variables). In this sense, dimension one would be explained by country region and barriers other than labor market, while dimension 2 would be explained by the type of mover and labor market (see table and figure below, dealing with Discriminant measures).

This makes sense when one looks at the barrier categories (low, medium, high), they are positioned from lower to higher in the map. Regarding the regions, South and North-West seem to be diametrically opposed (the Eastern countries being in the middle). Regarding the type of interviewee, note how outgoing and returnees (the ones that are in their region of origin) are in the antipodes of incoming (those that are living outside their homeland). Moreover, those who are living abroad are coping with real barriers, so their perception of difficulty tends to be high. Logically, experts (dealing with all types of movers) are in the in-between.

Discriminant measures

| | Dimension | | Average |
|----------------|-----------|--------|---------|
| | 1 | 2 | |
| Country Region | ,512 | ,311 | ,412 |
| Bureaucracy | ,664 | ,460 | ,562 |
| Language | ,627 | ,341 | ,484 |
| Discrimination | ,832 | ,505 | ,669 |
| Life | ,437 | ,125 | ,281 |
| Job | ,500 | ,543 | ,521 |
| Information | ,006 | ,065 | ,036 |
| Other | ,041 | ,330 | ,185 |
| Type of mover | ,352 | ,502 | ,427 |
| Total activo | 3,971 | 3,182 | 3,576 |
| % de varianza | 44,121 | 35,353 | 39,737 |

Medidas discriminantes (Discriminant measures)



Part II: Overcoming the barriers to free movement

Having identified the main barriers to the free movement of EU citizens above, we now consider the facilitators for overcoming these barriers. These facilitators include the means used by the interviewees and mentioned by the experts as well as including their suggestions for improvements. In the first three sections, we consider the facilitators for overcoming barriers as reported by nationals from the three regional groups (see Table 1 for definitions) of North-West, South and East, respectively, who are considering a move to another EU state. Afterwards, we examine facilitators as reported by incoming EU citizens into the countries of these three regional groups. Then we turn our attention to the returning nationals of the Southern and Eastern regional groups who have spent some time in another EU member state. We finally analyze the views of the experts from the three regional groups. Lastly, we summarize our findings.

Overcoming the barriers to free movement as reported by **outgoing** nationals to other EU countries

The first group free movers we look at are the prospective free movers from the countries grouped together in the North-Western, Southern and Eastern parts of the European Union. Following the groups in this order, we examine their views on what might help them to overcome the barriers facing them in moving to a different EU member state.

North-Western outgoing nationals

From the national analyses of the research groups studying free movement from the North-Western areas of the European Union, we find the following as the main facilitators that promote movement or can help overcome barriers:

1. More jobs and a stable economy was identified as a factor that can facilitate free movement as it helps open up the minds. Furthermore, having an employer in the destination country can facilitate with dealing with bureaucratic obstacles. Prominent among the suggestions for further facilitation is additional help from employers, such as a the provision of a welcome box including information about the country and city.
2. Having relations in the destination country: Having family, partners, friends or acquaintances in destination country - or friends who are also planning to move are also important facilitators, particularly relations that are already familiar with the language and bureaucratic requirements of the host country.
3. Information: Other facilitators are the social networks in the destination country. These include Internet forums where people who have experience with moving to another country share their story.

4. Previous migratory experience: The mover already knows where to find the necessary information and speaks the language. In case of movement to a different destination, the previous experience gives confidence and familiarises the mover with what to expect elsewhere. This aids them in being well-informed and having a clearer idea of what life in the destination country will be like.

Southern outgoing nationals

For nationals considering moving from one of the countries in the South of the European Union, the following have been identified as the main facilitators towards overcoming expected barriers to movement:

1. The moving experience itself - most of the interviewees generally share a positive point of view on mobility experiences, referring to getting stable employment, earn money and gain stability, sharing cultures, diversity, losing the fear of moving, and so on. Difficulties are expected; but these are considered as a part of the moving process and an element of personal development. The right to move freely creates a real sense of European citizenship – a very positive feeling.
2. Networks/relationships: the presence in the destination country of known people that have come through the same process before. One of the main methods for promoting movement abroad was the utilisation of their own networks: social circle, family and professional contacts. The internet was not used much, but many movers sought accurate and updated information from their trusted networks. Would-be movers thus address potential problems by asking advice from relatives or friends who live in the destination country.
3. Access to information: Many mentioned the internet as the main route to accessing the necessary information. This is a particularly valuable resource for those lacking more personal connections in the destination country.

Eastern outgoing nationals

The last group we consider from the outgoing prospective free movers are those from the Eastern group of countries. The main facilitators of movement from the interviews with this group are as follows:

1. Ease of movement within the EU: In general, the interviewees perceived moving inside EU very easy compared to moving to some non-EU country, mostly because they feel they are not so far away and no financial contribution is required. In general, interviewees feel well-informed about their rights and duties related to free movement in the EU. They felt that information could be found easily in case they encounter a situation where they need to learn more about their rights.
2. Access to information: Prior to moving they try to inform themselves on how their life would be abroad, what opportunities they might have and the possible problems and on how to address them.

Their main source of information, is the internet. The second most commonly mentioned source of information are friends or family members.

3. Pull factors – better pay and living standards: The simple fact that there is the possibility of a better life abroad helps to overcome potential barriers.
4. The moving experience: This group also highlights the intrinsic value of exercising their right to free movement. They point out the positive aspects of learning a new language, experiencing a new culture personal growth and the strong desire to feel as a global citizen as well as the opportunity to expand one's horizons.

Summary of outgoing nationals

In summary, the main facilitators for overcoming barriers to free movement as perceived among prospective movers are personal contacts in the destination country, access to information and the appeal of moving as a value itself. Many from the poorer countries also feel that the prospect of improved pay and living standards helps to overcome barriers.

Overcoming the barriers to free movement as reported by incoming nationals to other EU countries

Next, we examine the views on overcoming barriers of incoming EU citizens into the regional groups of countries.

Incoming EU citizens to the North-Western region

The first group we look at are the EU citizens that have come to live in the North-Western group of countries. They report the following as the main facilitators in overcoming barriers to their stays:

1. Inclusion and integration policies: The UK government, for instance, promotes the inclusion of movers with policies and legislation that foster equality. Another initiative by the UK government is the provision of English classes. Likewise, in Belgium, language courses are offered at the Agency for Social and Civic Integration.
2. Social networks: The majority of movers in the sample had at least one person in the host country who initially helped them to integrate. A close relationship with a person from another EU country is often a motivating factor – it is frequently the reason for moving. The main source of information and help was frequently the social network (In France or in the Netherlands for instance, nationals they knew in the country or foreigners living there) of the free movers. The formal and informal networks of the young people moving to the receiving country turns out to be the main recourse when it comes to overcoming barriers related to practical, administrative and legal

matters. Another form of more professional support is provided by migrant self-run organisations and support groups.

3. Labour market: support and help from the workplace, family and friends, partners. The main driver for movement is also the facilitator: employer; love, partner. Moving back to the country of origin is not an option for movers who do not find a job in the destination country. Thus, work is a driver and a barrier of movement at the same time if the qualifications are not usable in the destination country.
4. The country itself: For instance, France is already a known entity. Twelve interviewees explained that one of the reasons they came to France was that they already knew the country.

Incoming EU citizens to the Southern group of countries

EU citizens that have come to live in the Southern countries of the European Union report the following as the main facilitators in overcoming barriers to their stays:

1. Welcoming/integration policies: The right to move freely within EU borders is facilitated by the cooperation of local institutions in charge of assisting the newly arrived in finding jobs (job centres), or housing (the office within each municipality in charge of housing-issues) or in charge of providing them with relevant information regarding, for example, the permit of stay, family-reunification. In Portugal, for instance, The High Commission for Migration (Alto Comissário para as Migrações) is one organisation known by some interviewees who had used it to get support particularly in what concerns the Portuguese tax system.
2. The Eastern condition: Romanians and Bulgarians feel that now there is now more freedom of mobility and that people can move to have new experiences and not only for economic reasons.
3. The free circulation system itself: Most of the interviewees generally share a positive point of view on mobility experiences arguing that It opens one's mind, and its helpful to live in another scene, with a different culture. There are also other factors, such as traveling, knowing new cultures...
4. Social networks: Importance of local contacts. Many of the interviewees noted that in their particular sector, it is impossible to find job without knowing anyone. Regarding their everyday problems, they relied on friends and acquaintances to address them. Resorting to social networks, especially for those who already knew Portugal via Erasmus participation, is the most frequent practice for overcoming difficulties.
5. Labour market: The capacity of the tourism industry to absorb seasonal workers was the reason motivating young Western Europeans to seek temporary work in Cyprus.

Incoming EU citizens to the Eastern EU countries

EU citizens that have come to live in the Eastern countries of the European Union report the following as the main facilitators:

1. Social network/diaspora organisations: The most influential practice turned out to be the expat community in the social media. People in similar situations have made groups where they can share their experiences and give advice to other people facing similar obstacles.

2. labour market conditions: Working in multinational companies that can provide “experience exchanges” has often been mentioned as the best practice to promote the right to move freely.

Summary of views of incoming EU citizens

There are differences in the facilitators experience by incoming EU citizens into the three regional groups. While social networks and diaspora organisations are important for all, EU citizens moving into the North-Western and Southern countries of the EU apparently have more recourse to state organised resources, such as integration and job centres. Otherwise, the economic and social features of the countries themselves act as facilitators. Similarly, just the opportunities for free movement within the EU provide are by themselves facilitators.

Returnees

Next, we examine the views of returning nationals who have spent some time in another EU country. Since among the North-Western group only the Austrian team interviewed this group, we concentrate on the experiences of nationals returning to the Southern and Eastern EU countries.

Southern returnees

Nationals of the Southern countries of the European Union that have returned after living in another EU country report the following as the main facilitators in overcoming barriers:

1. The moving experience: For many interviewees, the main booster is the free movement itself. Even if circumstances force them, it really is still something positive, since it opens up new opportunities they wouldn't have otherwise. For some of them It is negative just the fact that they choose it due to a lack of alternatives. Moving experiences are lived in an individual perspective. Therefore, the strategies to overcome difficulties are mostly making use of the own competences and resources.
2. Social networks: Addressing problems related to information, respondents mentioned that they accessed the necessary information through the internet or addressed colleagues or friends to ask for help or advice including their assistance to overcome language barriers. The establishment and existence of social networks was mentioned as the main way of assistance and support to deal with any kind of difficulties and barriers in everyday life but also in communication with authorities.
3. The passage of time: Time is one important dimension. With time things happen – getting a job is maybe the first step for overcoming other difficulties. When time is passing and the problems remain, the strategy has been the return to the country of origin.

Eastern returnees

Similarly, nationals of the Eastern countries of the European Union that have returned after living in another EU country report the following as the main facilitators in overcoming barriers:

1. Public help/services to returnees: For example, Estonian e-services (when tackling bureaucracy) were the factor that made moving back to Estonia significantly easier. A few returnees had received help from the Estonian missions in the other country they had been living in.
2. Self-preparation: Students' preparation for living abroad is a field where most good practices can be found. Examples are training sessions, trying to learn the language, keeping in touch with the host organization or reading general information on their travel/job/country of destination. On the other hand, others (more numerous), simply did nothing with respect to their migration process; the only activity they reported to have done is a "preparation of the mind and soul".

Summary of returning nationals

The nationals returning from a stay in another EU member state are an interesting group in that, whether by choice or not, they did not continue their stay. It may be that they were unable to find a sufficient facilitator to keep them abroad. Indeed, they do not report much in terms of available resources beyond the use of social networks for facilitating their stays abroad.

Authorities

We turn next to the views of the authorities and experts from the different regions.

North-Western authorities

We first consider the experts from the countries in the North-Western region of the European Union. These experts are typically more involved in the integration of EU citizens into their own countries than in supporting their nationals in moving to other EU countries. These are the main facilitators they highlight:

1. Existing organisations/public services/initiatives that help European movers/migrants in general: The Belgian Centre for General Well-Being, for instance, has a service for refugees, but anyone with questions about their rights of residence is welcome. Other resources are available at the EU Rights Clinic in Brussels – Europe4people and Myria (the federal migration centre). In addition, the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) aims to support the social cohesion and social integration of persons at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Deprived newly arrived EU citizens and their children as well as homeless people can receive support from the fund.

2. Public services/public registration services often provide more than just the registration of new arrivals; they are often active in the provision of information to EU citizens.
3. Social Networks: Movers to France, for instance, frequently have family members already in France.
4. The country itself: Countries such as France are already known. Some movers want to stay in France because they feel protected.
5. Job opportunities: movers go to the North-Western countries because they think they will have more job opportunities there.

Southern authorities

The authorities in the Southern countries are often involved both in facilitating free movement for their own nationals as well as integrating EU citizens from elsewhere. The main facilitators they highlight are institutional: The right to move freely within EU borders is facilitated by the cooperation of local institutions in charge of assisting new arrivals in finding jobs (job centres), or a house (the office within each municipality in charge of home-issues) or in charge of providing them with relevant information regarding, for example, the residence permit or family reunification. One of the NGOs interviewed currently provides the following services: activation, training and accompaniment of youth - always in direct contact with them, individual training actions, giving courses in pre-working matters (basic computer lessons, social skills) and vocational training according to their interests. At university, the mobility question is well known and many programs exist. Finally, INJUVE (Public administration in Spain) works within the Eurodesk Network (www.eurodesk.eu) Youth Information Network specialized in mobility opportunities.

State officers interviewed reported that the picture is overall very positive because the volume of complaints to the Labour Office or to EURES is negligible. They point out that if there were problems then they would be flooded with complaints, but they hardly receive any. A similar position is taken by the employers' association.

EU workers who join trade unions benefit from all services offered by these organisations.

On the other hand, the support provided by Greek authorities is limited.

Eastern authorities

The authorities from the Eastern countries of the EU are also involved both in sending of their own nationals as well as the reception of EU citizens from other member states. Among the facilitators to overcoming barriers they highlight are the following:

1. Counseling public services/programmes: Some of the authorities interviewed noted different counseling services as practices which make moving to a new country easier.
 - In Estonia, at present, counseling is available for both people who wish to move to a foreign country, as well as returnees. Awareness-raising campaigns were also organized for people who move to Finland, for instance (one of them on the features of human trafficking with an aim to prevent people engaging themselves into unofficial working agreements). Different institutions have developed websites for specific target groups, e.g. “Work in Estonia” for people who move to Estonia for work, or “Study in Estonia” for people who move to Estonia to study. In 2016, the Ministry of Interior also launched a website “Settle in Estonia”. The authorities also highlighted improved data exchange between Estonia and Finland (automatic data exchange in the field of commercial registers, population registers, social benefit data, e-prescriptions and maritime affairs).
 - In the Netherlands, a network of policy officers was created at the Dutch embassies in the new EU member states – Poland, Bulgaria and Romania – with the task of raising awareness about the Dutch labour market and the problem of exploitation of Eastern European workers in the Netherlands by work agencies. Information is provided about regulations and working conditions, social and political rights.
 - The SOLVIT system furthermore helps people who encounter difficulties in another country when public authorities do not apply EU legislation correctly. European student exchanges (such as Erasmus) also facilitate free movement through early exposure of students to diversity and living abroad.
2. Other institutions that provide useful info: British trade unions (GMB) provide English language classes and thematic meetings to Polish movers.
3. Developing national strategies: Bulgarians working abroad and sending money to their relatives at home are a major ‘financial injection’ in the Bulgarian economy. In addition, studying and working abroad could turn into a ‘period of transformation’ and could be hugely beneficial to many people who acquire an invaluable set of skills and an impressive work ethic that they could later apply in their jobs in Bulgaria. Working with and for youth is one of the top priorities for the Bulgarian administration – they promote an internship programme that supports the personal achievements of young Bulgarian researchers working in the fields of informatics and information technology. The State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad (SABA) activity is also directed towards the associations of young Bulgarians abroad, providing up-to-date information on current events of interest in Bulgaria and on all other types of information that a person abroad would find useful. For that purpose, three online portals have been developed. In addition, youth policies in Bulgaria are subject to inter-sectoral collaboration between the different ministries in the country. The main focus of the Ministry of Youth and Sports is on encouraging young people to stay to pursue higher education and employment in Bulgaria. The National Youth Programme aims to provide free access to quality services, educational trainings and consultations to young citizens.

Summary of the views of the authorities

In summary, the authorities involved in free movement highlight numerous resources available to those wishing to exercise their right to relocate within the EU, both for their own nationals as well as for incoming EU free movers. The focus of the authorities reflects the relative flows. Nevertheless, the services they mention are not so frequently discussed by free movers, particularly the ones returning from stays in other EU member states.

Conclusions

In the first part of this report, we examined the information gathered by the fifteen national team participants in the ON-THE-MOVE project concerning the principle barriers to the free movement of EU citizens to other member states. We found that the perceived barriers of prospective free movers and the experienced barriers of those who have moved differ by regional groupings. Interviews with free movers from the North-Western countries of the European Union indicate lower levels of perceived and experienced barriers to movement. These perceptions and experiences tend to be more severe for movers from the Eastern countries, while movers from the Southern countries of the EU tend to report perceptions and experiences somewhat between the other two groups. Discrimination seems to remain a problem, with greater reporting of experienced discrimination on the part of movers from Southern Europe especially, compared to anticipated levels of prospective movers. (While reports of experienced discrimination are higher for the Eastern EU movers, the outgoing movers from the East seem to anticipate discrimination more than those from the South.) Otherwise, the main hurdles are bureaucratic and linguistic in nature, if we discount issues such as climate and cultural differences.

In the second part of the report, we then looked at the principle facilitators for overcoming the identified boundaries. We find that there are a good deal of resources highlighted by the representatives of the authorities as available for free movers, at least into Southern and North-Western Europe, but these are less often discussed as facilitators by the free movers. In general, it always helps to have a close friend or family member in the destination country, but in any case, the free movers quite often turn to online sources and diaspora networks.

Our findings thus indicate that there is more work to be done in facilitating the free movement of EU citizens. We should also stress that in these times of migration crises in Europe, the free movement of citizens is a major accomplishment of the European project that must be cherished and protected.

References

ON-THE-MOVE national teams (2016-2017) *ON-THE-MOVE National Reports – Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, United Kingdom*. Available on the project website: <http://euonthemove.eu/>